

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

Vol. IX.

BOSTON, FEBRUARY, 1901.

No. 9

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892

GEORGE H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 272 CONGRESS ST., BOSTON.

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EZEKIEL'S VISION.

If, when the Lord of Glory was in sight,
Thou turn thy back upon that fountain clear,
To bow before the "little drop of light"
Which dim-eyed men call praise and glory
here,
What dost thou but adore the sun, and scorn
Him at whose only word both sun and stars were
born ?

If, while around thee gales from Eden breathe,
Thou hide thine eyes, to make thy peevish moan
Over some broken reed of earth beneath,
Some darling of blind fancy dead and gone,
As wisely might'st thou in *Jehovah's* fane
Offer thy love and tears to Thammuz slain.

Thou who hast deigned the Christian's heart to
call
Thy Church and Shrine, whene'er our rebel
will
Would in that chosen home of thine install
Belial or Mammon, grant us not the ill
We blindly ask: in very love refuse
Whate'er thou know'st our weakness would abuse.

Or rather help us, Lord, to choose the good,
To pray for nought, to seek to none but Thee,
Nor by "our daily bread" mean common food,
Nor say, "From this world's evil set us free":

Teach us to love, with Christ, our sole true bliss,
Else, though in Christ's own words, we surely
pray amiss.

—*John Keble.*

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER.

Prayer is the highest act of the human soul, the most sublime moment in human life, the most wonderful privilege of man. It certainly gives a singular dignity to "the awful soul which dwells in clay." It certainly tends to destroy the vain distinctions of our outward life, and to inspire us with a just respect for the meanest of our fellow-creatures, to know that this high privilege belongs to all.

But, in proportion to the greatness and blessedness of this privilege, its perversion is the more deplorable. There is nothing in the world more ineffably blessed and sublime than true prayer. But, when prayer becomes a form, a ceremony, a cold task, a decency, an external duty, it is the most offensive of human falsehoods. Mock not God, degrade not yourselves, by such prayers as these. A prayer which is felt to be merely a form comes over the soul of the sincere man like a freezing blast from a sea of ice. We wish to stop our ears and flee away from it.

Prayer is approaching voluntarily the Holiest and Loftiest Being. You would not run heedlessly into the presence of an eminent person,—you would not go to visit a great or good man without some consideration of what you should say to him. You would wish to dress your mind in its best thoughts, to lay before him your choicest and most valued knowledge; you would wish to be in a calm, and true, and gentle mood. Is not equal reverence due to God? Prayer also is a great action. It requires energy to pray. It requires us to concentrate and direct our mind toward the Unseen, the

Spiritual, the Infinite, and with earnest effort to carry up our thoughts, our needs, our love. But how often we pray without any such preparation, because the usual time for prayer has arrived! If we were always in a spiritual frame, no preparation would be necessary. But until we attain that spiritual state, until we become perfect men in Christ Jesus, until our whole life becomes a prayer and a psalm, we should make a preparation, if only for a few moments, before every prayer. We should turn in, and examine our state of mind, and see whether we are ready to perform this high act.

Next consider the nature of this preparation.

It should consist, first, in realizing the presence of God. "He that cometh to God must believe that *he is*," and that not merely in the cold assent of the intellect to the theological assertion that there is a first cause. No. But, if your mind has been separated from God by low cares, by worldly labors, if you have lost the sense of his great presence, turn in, realize now where you are, who is near you, whose eye is upon you. That ever open eye, to whose glance the night shineth as the day, that dread Presence which walks unseen on our right hand and our left, that awful and Infinite Being who holds us in the hollow of his hand,—realize that he is very nigh thee,—not afar off upon some distant throne, but giving thee the very breath which speaks his praise, moving the very pulse which throbs in warm gratitude to him, the life of thy life. Thus let thy words not be sent forth into a void inane to search for a distant power, but breathed reverently to Him who knows the unuttered thought.

Then, when we realize that we are in God's presence, let us also realize *why* we pray, what we need,—let us understand ourselves. Perhaps it is the close of the day. It has been a day of toil and of care; but now we are at its close,—the world is shut out, and we are alone with hearts which beat in warm sympathy with our own. We are about to thank God; but let us see first whether we are ready to thank him with our hearts. Are we really sensible of the love which has attended us through the day? Are we sensible that it was *God's* love which welcomed us in the cheerful

morning from the fresh air and the bright sky, that it was *God's* love which shone upon us from the kind eyes of earthly affection, or when in a friend's words, in a book which we opened for a moment, a thought came to us of high and generous virtue, which inspired us for the moment with a breathing after the same? We were in a gloomy mood, dispirited and sad; and a letter was brought to us, the words of which lay warm at our heart for hours. In all these events, and a thousand like events, do we stop with the earthly cause, or have we penetrated through to the heavenly cause? If we have seen God in these gifts, then we shall thank him sincerely now. So, too, in our prayer we are about to confess our sins. But, first, let us be sure that we *feel* our sins. Do we think how, all through this day, our feelings have been morose, our temper fretful, our words harsh and unkind, so that on the whole we have been making all around us unhappy rather than increasing their joy? Do we remember that we missed opportunities to-day, through our selfishness or indolence, of doing actions which would have made others happier or better,—opportunities which we shall never have again? Do we remember how our proud, careless words have led others to make light of sin,—have weakened their principles? Do we remember having acted the part of Satan to any, tempting them to evil instead of strengthening them for good? Do we remember how our duties, even when done, have been done with the hand rather than the heart, coldly and mechanically? Do we remember all the careless words we have spoken, some of which were barbed arrows of unkind surmise, of harsh and cruel judgment? It was our duty this day to have loved God with all our mind, heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourself. Alas! where has our love been? Perhaps we have not thought of God at all. Perhaps we have only thought of our neighbor to use him for our profit, to sneer at his character, to wound his feelings.

I think, if we ask ourselves such questions as these, that we shall be able to say with sincerity in our prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

And then, also, we propose to ask God to deliver us from evil and make us pure and holy. But let us be sure that we really

wish to be delivered from evil, that we are really conscious of the guilt and woe of sin, that we are deeply submissive to the will of God, and are ready to have him do with us what he will. If we have no strong desire for redemption, no hunger and thirst after righteousness, no purpose of self-consecration and submission, it is worse than vain to utter the *words* of petition. Let us, then, realize how much we need divine help, and the spirit of God in our hearts to form them anew into the image of his son. Let us look forward to the duties which lie before us, to the judgment which is to come, to the accountabilities we are under. Judging by the past, we may see how unfit we are to meet these duties and responsibilities, how certainly we shall always fail in the hour of temptation, as we always *have* fallen, unless God shall create in us a new heart, inspire us with a deeper faith, stronger convictions of the danger and guilt of sin, and a more solemn sense of eternal realities.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

COLLECT FOR SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
EPIPHANY.

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth, mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Grant us Thy peace, down from thy presence falling,

As on the thirsty earth cool night dews sweet;
Grant us thy peace, to thy pure paths recalling,
From devious ways, our worn and wandering feet.

Grant us thy peace, through winning and through losing,

Through gloom and gladness of our pilgrim way;

Grant us thy peace, safe in thy love's enclosing,
Thou who all things in heaven and earth dost sway.

Grant us thy peace, not as the world has given,
In momentary rays that fitful gleamed,
But calm, deep, sure, the peace of spirits shriven,
Of hearts surrendered, and of souls redeemed.

Grant us thy peace, that like a deepening river
Swells ever outward to a sea of praise.

O thou, of peace the only Lord and Giver,
Grant us thy peace, O Saviour, all our days!

—*Eliza Scudder.*

A PRAYER, GOOD FOR A DARK HOUR.

Almighty God, the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. Not so to us: we stumble in the dark, we tremble and are afraid. We pray thee to be with us, not in the dark of the night only, but in the darkness of the day. Clouds of doubt pass over our souls: clouds of sin hide thee from our eyes. We gaze upon life's wonders till we can see no more. We watch thy glories till we are blinded with excess of light. Sorrow's tears dim our weak eyes till at last we are but as children crying in the dark. Even then would we stretch out the hand of feeble faith: touch us with thy right hand, and where we cannot see we will gladly go. Blind, we can sit by the wayside and cry; dark, we will turn to the east, whence must come the light. In the night, in the dark, in doubt, in sin, in storm, guide us by thy right hand. And, when we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, let thy rod and thy staff comfort us. Be thou, O God, our Light! Make us to know thee, the Light of the world! Always and everywhere lead us by thy right hand, and afterward receive us to glory. Amen.—*George Dawson.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Newtonville branch offer the following books. Address Miss E. T. Hooper, 136 Austin Street, Newtonville, Mass.

Religious.

"True Christian Religion"; "The Divine Word Opened"; "Death and Life"; a Testament; "Discourses on Life"; "The Higher Christian Life"; "Symbolic Character of the Scriptures"; "Home Life"; "Words in Season"; "Evidences of Christianity"; "Unto the Desired Haven"; "Helps by the Way"; "Character, its Elements and Developments."

Miscellaneous.

"Inquire Within" (3,700 facts for the people); "Practical Housekeeping"; "House and Home Papers," Mrs. Stowe; "Fresh Gleanings"; "Garfield's Words"; "The Great Missionary to Calcutta"; "Artist, Merchant, and Statesman"; "Germany," Mme. de Staël; "Modern Frenchmen"; "Illustrations of Genius"; "Fredrika Bremer"; "Men of Science"; "Conversation"; "Arctic Exploration" (in 1853, 1854, 1855); "Memoir and Remains of De Tocqueville"; "American Men of Letters"; "Art of Discourse"; "Earth and Man"; "Text Book of Geology"; Latin and German Grammars; "Greek Reader"; *Review of Reviews*, 1894; *Monthly Science*, 1882, 1883, 1884; *Outlook*, 1898; *Harper's*, 1888, 1889, 1890. "A Paper on the Inauguration of Washington"; "Acadia"; Eliot's "History of the United States"; "Shakesperian Diary"; "King's Daughters' Diary"; "Whist"; Longfellow's "Poetical Works"; "House of Seven Gables"; Tennyson's "Poems"; *Student and Schoolmate*; "Our Homes"; "Breakfast, Luncheon, and Tea"; "Tales of the French Revolution"; "Dreamland by Daylight"; "An American Politician"; "Voice and Action"; "Exercises in Spelling."

The following books are offered by Mrs. R. T. Liffier, 76 Alleghany Street, Roxbury, Mass.: "The Cruise of the 'Restless'"; "On Inland Waterways," James Otis; "Agatha Webb," A. K. Green; "The Golden Hope"; "The Two Captains"; "The Romance of a Midshipman," William Clark Russell; "The Sign of Four"; "The Firm of Girdlestone"; "Cruise of the Black Prince," Lovett Cameron; "On Many Seas: The Life of a Yankee Sailor," F. B. Williams; "From the Fore-castle to the Cabin," Capt. S. Samuels; "Adventures of Captain Kettle," Cutcliffe Hyne; "Cupples Howe, Mariner," George Cupples; "The Cruise of the 'Cachalot,'" Frank T. Bullen; "Mary Paget," Minna Smith.

The Eastport Branch offer the following. Address Mrs. L. H. Newcomb, Key Street, Eastport, Maine. *Youth's Companion* for 1892, 1893, 1898, 1899, 1900; *Outlook* for 1899, 1900; Channing's "Works" (3 volumes); *Strand*, *Babyhood*, *Argosy*, *Black Cat*, *Current Literature*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Century*, *Mun-*

sey; "Lifted up, or Life of Walter Douglas"; "Jenny and the Insects"; *Public Opinion* (magazine).

School-books.

Werner's "Arithmetic," first, second, and third grade; graded "Readers"; graded "Arithmetic," Nichols; Robinson's "Mental Arithmetic"; Barnes's "Geography"; Mayhew's "Practical book-keeping"; Swinton's "Language Lessons"; Stickney's "Third Reader"; Swinton's "School Composition"; "German Reader"; "Normal Readers," third and fourth, Emma J. Todd; "Health for Little Folks"; Lippincott's "Readers," second and third; Greenleaf's "Mental Arithmetic"; Harkness's "Latin Reader"; "Higher Lessons in English," Reed and Kellogg; "Lessons on Common Minerals," Macleod; "New Latin Method," Allen; Swinton's "Second Reader"; "American Word Book," Patterson; "Franklin Fifth Reader"; "First Steps in English Literature"; "Hygiene for Young People"; song book, "Morning Star"; song book, "Temple."

The King's Chapel Branch offer the following books. Address Miss Helen R. Healy, 373 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass. "A Run around the World"; "Swiss Family Robinson"; "Robinson Crusoe"; "The Old Oaken Bucket"; "Young Days"; "Juliana Horatia Ewing and her Books," Horatio K. F. Gatty; "Little Sunbeam's Picture Book"; "Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood," George MacDonald; "Life in the Woods," John C. Geikie; "Maggie's Dream"; "A Summer at Aunt Helen's"; "Grand-mamma's Surprise Party"; "The Purse of Gold"; "Dotlie's Bequest"; "Stevie's Visit"; "Fighting the Sea," E. A. Rand; "A Boy's Adventures in the Wilds of Australia," William Hewitt; "Aboard the 'Mavis,'" Richard Markham; "Jed: A Boy's Adventure in the Army, 1861-65," Warren Lee Goss; "My Fire Opal, and Other Tales," Brooks; "Laddie," author of "Miss Toosey's Mission"; "The Mermaid," L. Dougall; "Sweet Cicely"; "At the Pastor's"; "A New Spirit of the Age"; "As You Like It," Shakespeare; Black's "Tourist Guide to Derbyshire"; "The Expert Waitress," Springsteed; "The Little Dinner," Herrick; "On Seasickness"; "X-rays," Gail Hamilton; Jones's "Musical Catechism"; "Every-day Wonders of Bodily Life," Anne Bullar; "The Faith that makes

Faithful," sermons, Gannett and Jones; "The Story of La Roche," Mackenzie; "The Lover's Tale," Tennyson; "The Cup of Loving Service," Taylor; "First," a talk with boys, Henry Drummond; "Second Supplement to Autobiographical Sketches," George Angell; "Revolt of the Tartars," De Quincey; an Essay on Francis Parkman; "Foreign Cage Birds: Full Directions for Breeding, Rearing, and Managing Foreign Aviary Birds," C. W. Gedney; "Strange, but True"; "Life and Adventures of Capt. Thomas Crapo and Wife"; "Restatement of Christian Doctrine," Henry W. Bellows; "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; "A Reverend Idol"; "Mosaics and Lyrics," Marcus Fayette Bridgman; "Farmer's Bulletins"; "The Sugar Beet"; "Care of Milk on the Farm"; "The Days of Mohammed," Wilson; "Tunes with Hymns"; "A Book of Remembrance," sermon by A. P. Peabody, D.D.; "Titus, a Comrade of the Cross," Florence Kingsley; "A Question Book on the Life of Jesus Christ," S. H. Winkley; "A Practical Question Book for Sunday-schools," S. H. Winkley; "A Life of Jesus Christ for Young People," H. N. Brown; "Our Daughters: A Talk with Mothers," Marion Harland; Richardson's "New Method for the Pianoforte," 1859; Richardson's "Modern School for the Pianoforte," 1853; "New England Conservatory Piano Method," 1870; "Gloria in Excelsis: A Collection of Church Music," 1855.

The following books are offered by the Second Church Branch, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass. First requests must be accompanied by a reference.

"Fairy Tales," Andersen; "Stories from China"; "Wooring of the Water Witch," J. M. Smith; "Prince of Argoli"; "The Mysterious Island," J. Verne; "Anthony Weymouth," W. H. G. Kingston; "Ambergris Island," George R. Jackson; "Burying the Hatchet," Elijah Kellogg; "Going South," "Down South," "Going West," "Out West," Oliver Optic; "Frank, the Young Naturalist"; *Harper's Bazar*, 1899; the *Puritan*, 1898; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1897-1900.

The following books are offered by the Hawes Branch Women's Alliance. Address Miss D. G. Putnam, 81 K Street, South Boston, Mass.

Hillard's "Sixth Reader"; Monroe's "Sixth Reader"; Eaton's "Arithmetic"; Eaton's "Algebra"; "Commercial Arithmetic"; Kirk's "Grammar"; "History of the United States" (Seavey, Goodrich); "Fourteen Weeks in Chemistry"; "The Child's Book of Nature"; "Latin Grammar" (Andrews); "Quiet Hours," Poems; "Robert Elsmere"; "Oliver Twist"; "Chantry House," C. M. Yonge; "Letters from New York," L. M. Child. The following French books: Ploetz's "Easy French"; Bôcher's "French Reader"; Sain's "Notes" ("L'Angleterre"); "Le Grand-père"; "Histoire de Charles XII."; "Nouveau Testament"; "Euclid," Part I.; "Moral Philosophy" (Haven); "A Christian Life" (Dr. Robbins); a Bible (small); "Palestine and Hebrew People"; "Two Years with Jesus."

Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass., offers dance music and other, both classical and otherwise, of greater and less difficulty.

Mrs. S. M. Hayes, Union City, Pennsylvania, has about forty "Hymn and Tune Books," published in 1871 by the Unitarian Association, which she will be glad to give to any society needing them.

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado.) 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

Mrs. M. A. McGehee, Vulcan, Orange County, Virginia, lives in a lonesome place, and asks for reading for herself and three children.

Mrs. M. E. Hasting, Sanco, Texas, wishes

to thank those that have sent her reading, and asks for recitations for children.

I am a young housekeeper, alone nearly all the time. I prize good books, but am not able to buy. Any kind friend who will please send me any of the following books will help me to spend my lonely hours more pleasantly: "Grace Truman"; "Stepping Heavenward"; "My Wayward Partner," by Josiah Allen's Wife; Worcester's Academic Dictionary; "Ships that pass in the Night." Mrs. W. G. Church, Lucile, Wilkes County, North Carolina.

It has been quite a while since I asked for reading through the *Cheerful Letter* and the dear friends were so very kind; but my mother was hurt, and was ill so long that, when she recovered, the little grandchildren had misplaced my letters, and no thanks for the literature had been returned. But I do thank them all, for myself and little Clarence, too, for everything that has been sent us. Now that we are all well again and have time to read, and I am able to take a class in Sunday-school, I will be glad for any little books or cards for the class or reading for ourselves. I have received "Oliver Twist," "Tom Sawyer Abroad," "Robert Elsmere," and "Treasure Island," all of which I enjoyed very much, and thank the donors. Miss Rosalia Sowers, Floyd, Virginia.

Dear Madam,—I write to express my thanks for reading matter received, from *Cheerful Letter* friends. We are very thankful for the *Youth's Companion* from Master Samson S. Samson of Jamaica Plain, and my little boy Arthur wishes him to know how pleased he is with it. Two years ago some one sent Wood's "Natural History" at Christmas time, and he never tires of reading it. He would be happy to receive "Gulliver's Travels." He is deeply interested in the natural history sketches in *Cheerful Letter*, and takes considerable pains to seek the objects therein described, in his walks through the woods and by the brookside. I would be happy to receive for myself some pleasant novels to read this winter. I would very much like to read Beecher's novel, "Norwood." We pass on all reading to many who are glad to receive it. Mrs. A. F. Edwards, Pleasant Valley, El Dorado County, California.

Mrs. S. M. Hayes, Union City, Erie County, Pennsylvania, is one of a committee starting a reading-room for boys and girls who are not furnished with good reading at home. Anything suitable for young people will be gratefully received by Mrs. Hayes for the committee.

I would like to make a request for books suitable for a Sunday-school where there is no library whatever. I have a number of good books I intend to lend; but I would like others, for I have hardly enough to start with. There are such bright boys and girls attending the Sunday-school; and the majority of them are very fond of reading, and I would enjoy furnishing them with good literature. I have a lot of old school books, old song books, and scraps for scrap books. I would be glad to send a box full to any one who would pay the freight. Mrs. W. C. Smith, Chase, Kansas, Box 156.

It has been a long time since I asked for reading. Any good reading would be gladly received. Since subscribing to *The Cheerful Letter*, we have moved out of the free mail delivery. So our post-office is just Olympia, Washington.

We are in the woods now, fir-trees all around; but I like it, and don't get lonesome if I have something to read.

I am sincerely thankful for past favors, and hope I may be remembered again. Mrs. Ida Latson, Olympia, Washington.

Mrs. Hendon of Texas is grateful for what she has received, and asks that reading be sent her sister, Roxia Thompson, Fayborge, Texas.

Helen A. Jones, South Trenton, New York, would be pleased to receive "The Regular Army," by Francis V. Greene, "Eleanor" or "Edward Blake."

(Is it "Eleanor," by Mrs. Humphry Ward, that you wish? It is best to mention the name of the author.)

Mrs. M. L. Stricklin, Waco, Texas, leads a very lonely life in a place where there are but two white families. She asks for reading to pass away the lonely hours.

My address is changed from Sayers to Care Icke Brothers, East Commerce Street, San Antonio, Texas. We have not moved to town, but to another ranch where there

is no nearer post-office than San Antonio. I shall more than ever appreciate anything sent me to read, as we are strangers in this neighborhood and see very few people. Mrs. Pauline W. Newcomb.

The address of Mrs. Minnie Minor is changed from Chelsea to Oologah, Indian Territory.

The address of Mrs. J. W. Gale is changed from Unionville, North Carolina, to Concord, North Carolina.

I would like to read "In His Steps," and would like some of Dickens's books. I enjoy *The Cheerful Letter* so much, and thank the kind friend who sends it. Mother Earth is covered with snow here now, and I wonder how it is with you. May God bless you all, and reward you for your kindness to a lonely widow! Mrs. B. M. Wood, Thom Hill, Virginia.

Miss Clarke has received three requests for the copy of *New England Magazine* which she offered in the last number. She would be glad to receive offers of some more copies (for the current year), for which she will assign the names of those who have applied. Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

I have just received my *Cheerful Letter* which some kind unknown friend sends me each month, and I am always so glad to get it. It has been a great help and pleasure to me. I would be so glad to get the *New England Magazine*. If not, any kind of reading you may be kind enough to send me will be gratefully received. I am very poor, and not able to buy reading of any kind. I am a farmer's wife and the mother of four small children, the oldest twelve and the youngest four years old. All the reading I have had for the last year has been sent me by the dear *Cheerful Letter* people. I would be glad to get a calendar for this year if you have one to spare. Yours sincerely, Mrs. Mary L. Brown, Nettle Ridge, Patrick County, Virginia. I refer you to Rev. John Wimbish, Hunter, Patrick County, Virginia.

The post-office at Oakdale has been discontinued. Mrs. B. F. Smith's address is now Mountain View, Washita County, Oklahoma.

Mrs. N. P. Robertson, 906 Green Street, Danville, Virginia, would be glad to receive some good books and recent magazines, also fairy stories or something suitable for young children.

We are trying to make a home in a basin of the Rockies; it is sixty miles from a railroad, and our neighbors are from one to five miles apart. In summer we have school, but in winter we are snowed in. I should be glad to receive some good reading for my seven daughters. The oldest is sixteen and the youngest two years old. Mrs. B. B. Lawrence, Bowen, Montana.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[Contributions for this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

HONESTY AND POLITENESS.

Always in a refined community there are some individuals who have a natural antagonism to manners. The child in a household of well bred brothers and sisters may feel such a contempt for breeding as to cultivate its resentful opposite,—brusqueness. Sincerity has often an unbending pride of its own, and insists upon pressing knobs against the flesh of those who love a cushiony surface.

Certain young persons, feeling vaguely a pervading discontent with an environment too gentle for their bold spirits, are made aware for the first time of what ails them when they open the pages of history. How they delight in the rough humor of Richard, the Lion-hearted! And how vehemently they approve the fearless barons, innocent of courtly graces and dealing forth bluff words like blows! They tolerate Bayard for his bravery, but think his French courtesy a little overdone, while they have no sympathy with the sacrifice of the gallant Raleigh's cloak. Imitating well-beloved Robin Hood, they indulge in a rough sort of protection toward the younger ones in school, and are happy if they can gain a reputation for "taking the part of the under dog in the fight." The old Saxon lawlessness peeps out in these sturdy young shoots. No banner girds such liberty as truth, and independent natures gravitate thereto without knowing how much their devotion is owing to the

privilege of bearing arms against the entire world.

Few young people's heroines have ever had the success of Miss Alcott's "Jo." That rowdy damsel struck the warm chord of sympathy in thousands of little hearts rebellious against custom. She was one of the pioneers of the modern sentiment of girlish independence, which has grown in the last decade with mushroom rapidity. The existence of so lovable a rebel and free-thinker sanctioned the blunt speech which liberty-loving spirits are prone to indulge. Fastidious mothers are at a loss how to deal with the little daughters who take against social usages the high standard of honesty. Many a woman quails before the wide-open, innocent eyes that flash forth this righteous scorn, and feels herself hypocritical in the midst of her perplexed conviction that her child must be taught conformity.

Politeness—that exquisite politeness that breaks no rules, that carries itself as if society was a tender infant, to be soothed and humored—is a shield for sensitive souls, more invulnerable than the heel of Achilles. But those who need it most often oppose the protection it offers. They expose themselves to hurts, finding consolation in the idea that the persecution is "for righteousness' sake"; that the world is false and grovelling, and they the champions of truth.

What mistaken chivalry and false logic! We would have these youthful scornors of social law turn to Emerson's essay on "Behavior," and there read what the white-souled prophet of truth, the incorruptible and unsparing critic of society, says about the necessity of even that fine and delicate polish which it might be supposed so great a mind would have ignored if it were possible for any to do so with impunity. "The power of manners," he admonishes, "is incessant, an element as unconcealable as fire. No man can resist their influence. There are certain manners which are learned in good society, of that force that, if a person have them, he or she must be considered, and is everywhere welcome, though without beauty or wealth or genius." We cannot understand this to mean that thin veneering of politeness with which minds naturally coarse glaze over their real indifference to the feelings of others. This is the "French polish" that cracks under exposure to at-

mospheric changes, not genuine breeding. Our young enthusiasts are so far right that truth is the basis of fine manners. But truth should be at rest, serene, secure in its own strength. Its time will come. Above all else, the world wants this same truth; and some day it will turn to the silent one in the corner, and beg for the secret whose possession is betrayed by the luminous brow and expressive eyes. Then the triumph is all with him. There is the surprise of finding him right, of seeing him strong; and after this he is courted. I have seen a great statesman leave his side of the table and come around to talk to a modest little maiden of ten, drawn solely by the silent charm of the child's manner.

Florence Hull Winterburn.
(To be concluded.)

My dear Mrs. Howe,—"L. F. C." invites letters on the cause of the selfishness of boys and men. I suggest that the testimony one or twenty of us might offer could be worth little, because the causes are not in our families, but in the sex itself.

I enclose a paragraph from Darwin, and the quoted phrase "characteristic selfishness of man."

Yours respectfully,

A. L. P.

"Woman seems to differ from man in mental disposition, chiefly in her greater tenderness and less selfishness; and this holds good even with savages, as shown by a well-known passage in Mungo Park's 'Travels,' and by statements made by many other travellers. Woman, owing to her *maternal instincts*, displays these qualities toward her infants in an eminent degree. Therefore, it is likely that she would often extend them toward her fellow-creatures. Man is the rival of other men. He delights in competition; and this leads to ambition, which passes too easily into selfishness. These latter qualities seem to be his natural and unfortunate birthright." (p. 244, "Darwinism stated by Darwin himself," edited by Nathan Sheppard.)

On p. 247 he uses the term "*characteristic selfishness of man*," using the quotation-marks.

[L. F. C. is very much obliged to A. L. P., who is, so far, the only person who has responded to her request for short articles

on this subject, based on personal observation. The question in her mind was a little more "Do parents indulge girls more than boys?" as Mrs. Hunt accuses them of doing, than "Are boys more selfish than girls or men than women?". Her own observation would lead her to think it was the opposite tendency that usually prevails, and that boys are generally too much indulged, instead of being as Mrs. Hunt maintains "oppressed" by cruel parents.

One question suggests itself in regard to the quotation. As boys have a mother, as well as a father, why should they not inherit qualities from the one as well as from the other? We have all known boys who strongly resemble their mothers. If boys are selfish (as Darwin seems to believe), is heredity alone to blame? May the cause not be in the training as well?]

NATURAL HISTORY.

QUEER COMPANIONS.

On the coast of England lives a soldier crab, which inhabits the shell of a mollusk, finding it a strong and safe house, and at the same time one easily transported. On the top of his house grows a sea-anemone, and the best understanding exists between them. The crab, after he has obtained food, never fails to offer the best morsels to his neighbor, and often during the day ascertains if he be not hungry.

When the crab has grown too large for his shell, and finds it necessary to exchange it for one which is bigger, he has to manoeuvre with all the delicacy of which he is capable to make the anemone transfer itself to the new shell. He assists it in detaching itself; and, if by chance the new dwelling is not to the taste of the anemone, he seeks another, until the anemone is quite satisfied.

This story is told by a gentleman who has watched the private life of these animals. Otherwise, we might find it rather hard to believe that an animal like the crab, which is generally considered to have a rather bad temper, should show such an accommodating spirit. I wonder what return the anemone renders for these services. As far as I can see, it seems to have the best of the bargain.

You know that white coral is made by animals very like sea-anemones. You have seen it, have you not, showing many little

cups or depressions, each of which indicates the skeleton of one of the coral animals? A crab has been found living in one of these cups, of which the proper possessor has died or been killed. As the corals grew about him, the tube, at the bottom of which he lived in quiet meditation, became longer and longer, so that at last he was hardly able to reach to the top, even with the aid of his claws.

Some white coral is branching, like a shrub or bush. There is a crab which establishes himself in a fork of one of these branches, and the coral, growing about him, finally encloses him in a little chamber, which he can never leave; but a little open space remains as a window on each side of him, out of which he can look, and through which he can obtain a fresh current of water to breathe and food to eat.

Other crabs, of equally retiring dispositions, but with different tastes, select companions not in the least like corals or sea-anemones. They live inside the shells of oysters, mussels, or some other animal which has a two-valved shell. The one that lives in the oyster may sometimes be found in canned oysters. I used to think that it had got in among the oysters by accident, and never dreamed that they were friends, living together by preference. *Cora H. Clarke.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this column to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.]

I.

Pi.

Het uari si aiuring lal oundra
Si lafs no dielf nad reet
Si ainrs no het mebruelals ereh
Dna no het hipss ta ase.

II.

I am composed of 27 letters, and my whole is a well-known proverb.

My 1, 20, 15, 26, is to dislike.

My 3, 23, 5, 4, is to be idle.

My 24, 13, 18, is to wager.

My 22, 2, 10, 6, is a kind of tack.

My 25, 7, 2, 27, is a street in the country.

My 9, 8, 14, is stout.

My 18, 19, 17, 21, 11, 14, is to shove.

My 12, 16, 3, 6, makes a sound.

III.

A room with four corners had a cat in each corner, three cats before each cat, and a cat on every cat's tail. How many cats were there?

IV.

Make 5 less by adding to it.

V.

If the alphabet was invited out to a party, what time would u, v, w, x, y, and z go?

VI.

Why is a rheumatic person like a glass window?

VII.

Charade.

My *first* is to multiply.

My *second* we ought all to avoid.

My *whole* the most avaricious will give, and the poorest are seldom willing to receive.

Answers to Puzzles in January Number.

Charades.

1. E-migrate.
2. Justice (just-ice).

Buried Cities.

1. Madrid.
2. Barnstable.
3. Patterson.
4. Concord.
5. Toledo.
6. Orange.
7. Amherst.
8. Hanover.

Shakespeare Enigma.

"To-morrow is Saint Valentine's Day all in the morning betime."—*Hamlet, Act IV., Scene 5.*

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR.

HOW WE WENT TO OBER-AMMERGAU AND SAW THE PASSION PLAY.

One very warm day last summer we found ourselves suddenly tipped out of France into Germany. It might be supposed that we ought to have expected this, as we were on our way to Germany in a railroad train; but the suddenness of it was like falling out of a boat into the sea. At Deutsch-Avrécourt a man put his head in at the window, and began to rapidly jabber something or other, exactly as if we were Germans born. Our French conductor had

dematerialized without leaving a trace of sulphur (or tobacco smoke), and in my efforts to answer I found myself talking three languages at once.

Naturally, this was the Custom House. Before the end of the twentieth century, people will look back on these dark days of customs as we do on the Corn Laws and American Slavery.

Undine does not fulfil one of the missions of a niece; that is, to be the linguist of the party. In all the other travelling groups that we saw, the younger members did all the talking, and the elderly ones sat about, saying nothing. Undine refused even to order her own breakfast all the time we were in Germany. I can talk German well enough for daily use, if I have a little time to prepare my sentences. But I do not like to be taken by surprise, and be spoken to in German when I think I am in France. However, the baggage-carriers here are linguists, whatever the travellers may be. Ours took us at once under his paternal care, put us through the Custom House, assured the officer that we had nothing to declare (I should have said that I didn't know), took charge of all our baggage, carried us into the right waiting-room to get some tea, came back for us when our train came, and put us into the right "carriage."

If we only travelled long enough, we should forget how to do anything for ourselves at all.

We stayed a night in Strasbourg, and another in Munich.

The great cathedral is the feature of Strasbourg. I expected to see it ever so long before we arrived. When I was there before, we saw it, in the twilight, like an immense ghost of a cathedral,—not a suggestion of a city visible; only this great gray, shadowy apparition, skimming along the horizon for miles and miles. It was one of the weirdest sights I ever saw. I suppose we were not headed the right way for this view; for we arrived in a station just as usual. It might have been anywhere.

The first thing that strikes travellers on arriving in Germany is the oddness of the beds. A writer whom I lately happened to take up says that he thought his bed was a wooden tray, filled with sofa-cushions, pin-cushions, tidies, etc., that had been collected to store away somewhere. I had been

in Germany before, so I did not make this mistake; but Undine, all the time we were in Germany, prepared for repose by throwing into a corner of the room three-quarters of her bed-furnishing.

A bright idea occurred to us while in Strasbourg,—to economize time by leaving in the afternoon, and arriving at Munich at ten o'clock at night. This was quite successful, as we saw the cathedral in the morning and arrived in Munich the same day. The only error in our programme was that we forgot to allow time to eat anything before setting out, and there was no provision for meals on the way. So we nearly starved before we arrived; but, finally, we succeeded in getting out for ten minutes, and securing some rolls at a restaurant. It does not do to trust to luck for meals in travelling.

Munich has the most enjoyable picture gallery I ever saw. There is a wonderful number of *good* pictures: a great many Rubenses; a whole row of full-length portraits by Vandyke; a room almost full of Murillos; and everything else in the same proportion. It was also the least *fatiguing* gallery to visit that I ever saw. And now I know why most galleries are so fatiguing. It is because visitors are constantly worried by the poor paintings, which get in their way, when they want to be looking at the good ones. We did not try to see the modern gallery, only the old masters.

We did not go directly to Ober-Ammergau from Munich. We went to Garmisch, which is in the Bavarian Highlands, near Ober-Ammergau, to stay for a fortnight and rest.

The scenery here is very beautiful, all mountains, waterfalls, ravines, and especially the loveliest lakes, with clear, emerald green water. The greenness of the water in Bavaria and Austria is as peculiar as the blueness of the Mediterranean.

The first thing you do, on arriving in Garmisch, is to go on a long day's picnic. You camp for luncheon on the shore of one lake (a large one), then walk through the woods for ten minutes to another tiny one lying all alone among the mountains, like a great emerald. When I came back from this stroll, Undine had disappeared. It is almost as dangerous to travel among lakes and waterfalls with her as it would have been to do so with her original prototype.

She had plunged into the lake to visit her fellow-nixies. However, she by and by emerged, and condescended to rejoin the mortal members of the expedition. On the way back, we stopped at another lake, and there we rowed about in a boat, and had tea later in the open air,—a pleasant German custom; that is, the *air* is pleasant: the *tea* is made of hay everywhere in Germany. At our *pension* we had very good tea, because it (the *pension*) was kept by an English family. The Germans drink beer or else coffee; but tea they do not understand at all.

Every walk, drive, or excursion of any kind in Germany, ends in a "restauration." Everywhere you meet people drinking beer and eating bread with anise-seed in it, and, if the place tends toward luxury, omelets with hot jam inside of them. When you get off the track at all in Germany, the bill of fare is as droll as the beds. I tried to get some tea in a Munich restaurant (to be sure, it was a "Bier-Halle," one of the sights of Munich); and they brought me beer three times, first (at least, they tried to do so); and, finally, after about half an hour, the tea came in something that looked like a child's glass beer-mug! I asked the *Mädchen* what it was, and she said, "A tea-glass."

I liked the lakes very well in Bavaria; and the mountains; and the woods; and the droll little Bavarian villages, where some of the houses are all over frescos and carving, and the cows and pigs live in the houses and the people live out of doors; and the shrines of the virgins and saints (for Bavaria is Roman Catholic) all scattered along the roads, with every sort of fantastic structure to protect them; and the peasants in their national costume, green jackets and bare legs and breeches. But I did not like the ravines, with rushing torrents at the bottom and a slippery plank to walk on, beside them,—particularly one awful one called the Partnach-Klamm (*Klamm* means chasm). The rocks nearly met overhead, making it almost as dark as night. There were innumerable little streams pouring down from the heights above on the heads of the excursionists, so that it was like being in a heavy shower all the time or under a waterfall. The narrow plank walk along the edge of the torrent is wet through all the time; and we were encouragingly assured by our host that, if any one did fall in (and one false

step would cause the catastrophe), there was not the slightest chance of saving that person's life. It takes about half an hour to traverse this Inferno (of water, not fire); and through this ravine Undine was determined to go, and I was equally determined to follow her. For, although I could not pull her out if she fell in, I could perish with her, which would be some slight consolation to her family. However, we both came out alive, though I am very much surprised whenever I think of it. And we both thought that staying in the neighborhood of Ober-Ammergau, and gaining an idea of the setting of the place, —the scenery and the country roundabout and the people,—added something to our understanding and enjoyment. L. F. C.

(To be continued.)

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, March 1, at 10.30 A.M., at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. All interested in this work are cordially invited to be present.

Please notice that the address of the secretary has been changed from 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, to 373 Boylston Street, Boston.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never

doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country, for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.